

explicit terms that the Shah losing all hope of success against the Sikhs, thought of more conciliatory policy and with this object in view he was only too glad to place one of the Sikh chiefs, Sardar Ala Singh, in independent charge of the important Subah of Sirhand. He stayed in Lahore for a short time and after making hurried arrangements for the government of the province soon returned to Kabul. But as soon as the news was received that the Abdali had not crossed the Attock, the Sikhs turned out the Afghan governor and seized Lahore. On receiving the report of these happenings, so goes the traditional account, the Abdali felt helpless and is said to have remarked - *ازین قوم ہوئے بادشاہی می آئید* - (The manner of these people smacks of royalty.) What the Abdali was reported to have said was not far wrong. The Sikhs had been fighting for their political emancipation and they won it at last and established a sovereign state of their own in the Punjab.

CONTEMPORARY SOURCES OF SIKH HISTORY

(1469-1708)

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The history of the Punjab is practically the history of the Sikhs. Before the advent of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism, one can hardly point to any really great Punjabi who may be said to have left any permanent mark on the pages of history, but after him we have a long list of Punjabi saints and warriors and saint-warriors, who are reckoned among the brightest gems in Indian history and are proclaimed to be the defenders of the Indian race and culture.

In order to see what change has been brought about in the character and destiny of the Punjab, it is enough to compare the condition of the Punjab and the Punjabis as they existed before the advent of Sikhism and after the Sikh Gurus had lived and worked for them. It is a common thing now to admire the physique, the bravery and patriotism of the Punjabis, and of the Sikhs in particular, who were seen thousands of miles away protecting the lives and honour of the French and the Belgians in Europe during the Great War, and of the Ethiopians not long ago. But it is forgotten that these very people only four hundred and fifty years before had not the strength to defend their own homes and hearths against the Asiatic invaders and the children of the Punjab were taken away to be sold in the bazars of Ghazni and Kandhar. Where from has come this strength and the sense of honour? Not from any change in race or diet. It

was the spirit infused by the teachings and precepts of the Sikh Gurus Nanak to Gobind Singh (1469-1708) that brought about this tremendous change in the religious, social and political outlook of the people of the Punjab. A new force came into existence and developed into an independent power. This new power of the Sikhs freed the Land of the Five Rivers from the yoke of the Mughal and the Abdali and transformed it into an independent sovereign state. And it is since then that it has come to be an independent historical unit.

Again it is the Sikhs who have made it possible for the Punjab to now form a part—and not an unimportant part—of India. For seven hundred and fifty years before its independence under the Sikhs, it was more of an annexe to the Central Asian dominions of the various dynasties, from the Ghaznavis to the Mughals. It was only the country south of the Sutlej that was known as *Hind*, with the town of Sirhind (*Sar-i-Hind*—Gate of India) at its north-western gate. And had not the Sikhs conquered it from the Durrani, it might still have formed a province of Afghanistan into which it was converted by Ahmad Shah Abdali.

To understand this all and to interpret the various events connected with the history of the Sikhs during those eventful days of the eighteenth century when thousands of them unswervingly sacrificed their lives at the altar of their faith, it is but necessary to go back to the history of the Gurus and try to enter into the spirit of their teachings. It is a pity that no work has been done on this period, and it is therefore, that I propose to say, in this paper, some thing on the contemporary sources of Sikh history, 1469-1708.

The *Guru Granth Sahib* is the first and the most important original and contemporary source for the lives of first five Gurus, Nanak to Arjan, and of the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur. Several incidents connected with their lives are reflected in their versified utterances incorporated in that volume. And these utterances are the truest interpretations of the social, religious and political atmosphere of those days and of the various life-incidents and of the views of the Gurus regarding the then prevailing social customs, religious rites and political conditions in the country.

The compositions of the Gurus are not mere hymns addressed to God, but, as the Gurus took lively interest in the secular welfare of the people and as their organization roused controversy and opposition in different quarters, some of their utterances have great historical interest for us. They are the outpourings of their hearts either on the occasions of certain historical incidents or during their discussions with the professors and priests of other religions, or in the course of their advice or admonition to their disciples or other enquirers regarding the conduct of their lives,

The hymns of Guru Nanak referring to the various events of his childhood at Nankana Sahib, his life at Sultanpur, his visits to the places of Hindu and Muslim pilgrimages and his discussions and discourses with the Brahmins, the Yogis, the Sidhs, etc., are the only first hand sources of information on these topics. There is nothing available to excel his description of the condition of the people on the occasion of the sack of Saidpur (Eminabad) during the third Indian expedition of Babur in 1520-21. His revolt against the established formalism and his protest against the slave mentality of the Indians in giving up their national language and dress, just to please the ruling classes, are reflected in the *Asa di Var*, while his *Japji* and other hymns inculcate his views on Godhead, the relationship between the One Formless Self-existent Creator and His Creature, the man, and the conduct of human life in the world.

Similarly the *shabdas* of the other Gurus and Bhaktas set forth their views on social and religious subjects and refer to the reforms introduced by them and trace the gradual growth of the Sikh thought and the evolution of the Sikh *Sangats* into a distinct community.

The *Ramkali ki Var* of Satta and Balwand is more historical than religious in its nature and is a very important contemporary document for the students of Sikh History. It emphasizes that all the Gurus were identical in spirit with Guru Nanak, and, thus, it admits of no invidious distinction about the conduct of the different Gurus. To maintain the solidarity of the newly established *Panth* and to guard against the rise of sects and schisms, so common in the history of religions after the deaths of their founders, Nanak and the succeeding Gurus, the *Var* points out, inculcated for their disciples the strictest of discipline of life, and, after subjecting them to the severest of tests, appointed the most faithful as their successors during their own lives. This not only prevented the Guruship from becoming a hereditary possession by the usual system of primogenitory succession but actually defeated all opposition set up from time to time against the accredited nominees of the Gurus.

The hymns of Guru Amar Das in the *Wadhans ki Var* point to jealousy of a *Tapa* of Khadur towards Guru Angad and to his temporary excommunication from that place. The fourth Guru Ram Das refers, in the *Gauri ki Var*, to the avarice of a *Tapa* of Goindwal on the completion of Bawli Sahib and to the complaint of the Khattris of that place against Guru Amar Das which, of course, was dismissed as unfounded. In the *Tukhari Chhant* he describes, from personal experience, the visit of Guru Amar Das to Kurukshetra and Hardwar.

The *Sadd* of Sundar is an eye-witness's account of the death of the third Guru. It explains the Sikh attitude towards death and points out the futility of the then prevailing ceremonies, when the Guru is reported to have said:—"A saint or a true Guru is the one whom God's order is pleasing," and "Let no one weep when I am gone; that would not please me," etc.

The jealousy exhibited by Prithi Chand, contemptuously known in history as Prithia, on the nomination of his younger brother Arjan to the *Gaddi* of Guruship, is hinted at and condemned in *Rag Suhi* and the *Gauri ki Var*, and their father's (Ram Das's admonition addressed to the quarrelsome son is given in the *Sarang Rag*.

In the *Majh Rag* are found those three letters of Guru Arjan addressed to his father from Lahore and a complimentary note composed on his return to Amritsar in 1581, which formed a part of the test placed before him to prove his suitability for the *Gaddi*.

Guru Arjan sings in the *Suhi Chhant* of the constructions and completion of Hari Mandir, now called the Golden Temple, Amritsar, and in the *Sorath Rag* he describes the advantages of the *Sarovar* or the Tank of Ram Das. There are about a dozen hymns in the *Bilawal*, *Asa Gaund*, *Sorath*, *Gauri*, *Deva-gandhari* and *Bhairo Rags* referring to the birth and illness of Guru Hargobind and to the murderous designs against his life by the agents of Prithia and his wife. When Sulahi Khan made a common cause with Prithia and set out to wreak his vengeance upon the inoffensive Guru for the failure of their offensive mission at Delhi against him, the various suggestions made to the Guru are stated by him in a hymn in the *Asa Rag* wherein the Guru says that he preferred to rest all his hopes on God, and, in the *Bilawal Rag*, he points to the ignoble end to which Sulahi Khan came.

In the epilogue of the Holy *Grantha*, the author, Guru Arjan, while recommending his Book to the attention of humanity, describes it as a most precious food which it cannot afford to ignore.

Guru Hargobind wished to inspire the Sikhs with a spirit of manliness. He, therefore, added, in the beginning of certain *Vars* in *Granth Sahib*, the names of the *Dhwanis* or musical sounds in which they should be sung to produce the desired effect on their minds.

The *Shlokas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur, composed during his confinement at Delhi and incorporated in the *Guru Granth Sahib* by Guru Govind Singh, clearly indicate his detached view of his coming death. *Shloka* No. 54 in this composition is believed to be the courageous and encouraging reply of Guru Gobind Singh at the age of nine to his father's *Shloka* No. 53 sent to him at Anandpur to test the fitness of his successor.

Next to the *Guru Granth Sahib* in authenticity is the *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas (1551-1629), who was a contemporary of five Gurus, from Guru Angad to Guru Hargobind, and was very closely associated with four of them from the third to the sixth. Moreover, he was one of the few chosen and favourite disciples, next only to Bhai Buddha who had the unique fortune of anointing as many as five successors of Guru Nanak with the *Tilak* of Guruship. This speaks

for the valuableness of his writings, which the old Sikhs, as tradition has it, considered as a key to the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas, like his *Kabit Swaiyye*, are mainly devoted to the exposition of the tenets of Sikhism. The historical portion is confined to about eighty five *pauris* scattered in I (17-48), XI (13-31) and XXIV (1-25), with two *pauris* each in XXVI (31, 34) and XXXIX (2, 3) and one each in III ((12), XX (1) and XXXVIII (20). Six *pauris* (17-22) of *Var I* describe the religious, social and political state of affairs before the advent of Guru Nanak, while his travels and discourses, with particular reference to his visit to the Hindu and the Muslim places of worship and with his discourses (*gosht*) with the Sidhs and Mullas, are related in 23-44 of I, 1-4 of XXIV and 21 of XXVI. Joint references to the successors of Nanak, upto Guru Hargobind, and their oneness with him are found in *Var XXIV* (5-20) XXVI (34), XXXVIII (20) and XXXIX (2, 13), and the state of Guru Arjan's mind during the tortures that resulted in his martyrdom can be seen in *Var XXIV* (23).

Beyond the above two works, there is nothing known so far to claim to be a contemporary account of the first four Gurus. The well known *Janam Sakhi*, ascribed to Bhai Bala and said to have been written by Paira Mokha of Sultanpur to his dictation, as desired by the second Guru Angad, may, as available at present, be dismissed as incredible in many places for the reasons enumerated and discussed by the late S. Karam Singh in his *Katik kih Wasakh*. The only book which may be said to be the nearest approach to reliability regarding the life of Guru Nanak is the *Puratan Janam Sakhi* (written somewhere in the beginning of the seventeenth century), which is the same as *Wilayatwali*, *Hafizabadi* and *Macauliffe-wali Janam Sakhis*. This has been edited, in its present form by Bhai Sahib Vir Singh of Amritsar and published by the Wazir-i-Hind Press. As the learned editor observes in his preface, on the basis of internal evidence, this *Janam Sakhi* has as its source some other work which has not been unearthed, so far and which may be a contemporary record. Sardar Bahadur Bhai Kahan Singh, in his *Gur Shabdaratanakar Mahan Kosh*, the *Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature* (I, 685, i), mentions the name of one Sewa Das of Pothohra who wrote a *Janam Sakhi* of Guru Nanak in 1588, forty nine years after the death of the Guru, and it will be no wonder if that work, when traced, is found to be the source of the *Puratan Janam Sakhi*. The *Janam Sakhi* of Bhai Mani Singh is a later work of the eighteenth century and contains an account of the first Guru, with the last chapter devoted to his successors ending with the succession of Guru Hargobind.

A manuscript collection of the stories and compositions of Meharban and Harji, the son and grandson of Prithia, written in the oldest Gurmukhi script, and presented to the Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, by Sardar Sahib Bawa Udham Singh of Lahore in March 1932, is

another important contemporary record of the days of Gurus Arjan and Hargobind. The compilation appears to have been made by some follower of Meharban and Harji during the seventeenth century. The *shabdas*, or hymns, of Guru Nanak and discussions thereon made in the compilation are so interpreted as to deduce the superiority of his patron *Minas* as Prithia and his descendants were called by the fourth Guru Ram Das. It includes some *shabdas* of Meharban and Harji under the headings:—*Guru Meharban Mahal 7* and *Satguru Harji Mahal 8*, with the name of Nanak added towards the end, as it is found in the compositions of the Gurus. This is a very clear evidence to show the attempt of the descendants of Prithia to establish their own Guruship, in opposition to Gurus Arjan and Hargobind, which, however, was doomed to fail. With this, there also appeared a danger to the purity of the teachings of the Gurus which with the addition of these unauthorized compositions, at some later date, might have become so confused as to render the genuine hymns indistinguishable from subsequent interpolations. This was apparently one of the causes which induced Guru Arjan to collect together the compositions of the Gurus and compile them in the Holy *Grantha*. This collection is almost identical with the volume in the library of the late Sant Jwala Singh of Patiala ascribed to Meharban himself.

According to Shaikh Abul Fazal's *Akbar Namah* (III, 514-15) and Mulla Abdul Qadir Badaoni's *Muntakhib-ut-Tawarikh* or *Tawarikh-i-Badaoni*, Emperor Akbar paid a visit to the residence of Guru Arjan at Goindwal on the bank of the Beas on the 13th of Azur (Jamadi-us-Sani) 1006 A. H., 11th January, 1598. (O. S.) Badaoni tells us that the Emperor appreciated the teachings and character of the Guru. It was the result of this visit, as confirmed by Sujan Rai Bhandari's *Khulasat-u-Tawarikh* (Zafar Hassan's edition, p. 425), that, at the suggestion of the Guru, the Emperor ordered the remission of 10 to 12 per cent of the land revenue in the Punjab, as demanded by the changed circumstances on the departure of the Imperial forces from the country.

A passage of about twelve lines in the *Tuzk-i-Jahangiri* (Nawal Kishore's Edition, p. 35, lines 7-18) is an invaluable contemporary evidence regarding the causes which led to the arrest and imprisonment of Guru Arjan and the sentence of capital punishment with tortures passed against him by Emperor Jehangir. This, when read along with the account of the Guru's martyrdom in Sohan Lal's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* (Vol. I. 34) and Rattan Singh's *Prachin Panth Prakash* (p. 534)—both secondary but reliable sources—, demolishes the theory commonly advanced by the Sikh and other writers which amounts, in the eyes of non-devotee historians, to nothing more than suicide.

This may be critically compared with the letter of a Christian Padre, probably Father Jerome Xavier, written from Lahore in 1606 and published in Father Guerreiro's "Relacam Annal das Covsas que fezeram os Padres Da

"Companhia de Lẽvs nas partes da India Oriental" of the years 1606 and 1607, printed at Lisbon in 1609.

Mohsin Fani (1615-1670), the author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, was a personal friend of the sixth Guru Hargobind. He stayed with him for some time and, not unoften, was in correspondence with him, and was present at Kiratpur on the occasion of his death. He was also intimately known to Guru Har Rai the seventh Guru. His account of the Sikhs and Sikhism of this period, in the *Dabistan*, is, therefore, of the highest importance to the students of history. With the exception of a few minor errors, his account of the earlier Gurus and of the beliefs and practices of the Sikhs, recorded on the authority of the best informed people, can as well be safely depended upon. The above chapter, the "Nanakpanthia," of the *Dabistan*, covering some twelve pages (Nawal Kishore 1321 A. H. Edition), is the first known account of the Sikh people in Persian. But it has been the least drawn upon by writers on the subject, although the work was translated into English by Shea and Troyer for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland in 1843. Another translation of the "Nanakpanthia" was published by Sardar Umrao Singh Majithia in June 1930 issue of the *Khalsa Review*, and also by the writer of this paper in Punjabi in the *Phulwari* of Phagan-Chet, 1987, Bikrami. A revised English translation of it with footnotes and comments is being shortly issued.

Gur Bilas Chhewin Padshahi by Bhagat Singh, the only detailed work on the life of Guru Hargobind, was completed in Sambat 1775 Bikrami, 1718 A. D. It can neither claim to be contemporary nor original. According to the late Sardar Karam Singh, an old manuscript copy said to be a transcription of the original *Gur Bilas*, is available in the village of Gurusar in the District of Jhang, Punjab. It is said that a Sikh of Gurusar, related to a priest of the Akal Bunga Gurdwara, Amritsar, had this copy made from the original in the Akal Bunga and the present printed volume, available in the market, is an interpolated edition of this copy.

Abdul Natha, a bard of the village of Sur Singh, was a contemporary of Guru Hargobind and his *Varan* contain a detailed account of the battles of this Guru. The efforts of the scholar who would trace this work and place it in the hands of the public will be of immense service to the cause of history.

The *Khulasat-u-Tawarikh* of Munshi Sujan Rai Bhandari of Batala was being written and nearing its completion in the twenty second year of the spiritual reign of Guru Gobind Singh (1696 A. D.), as mentioned by the author on page 70 of Zafar Hassan's edition of 1918. This would make him a contemporary of at least the last four, if not five, Gurus from Guru Har Rai to Guru Gobind Singh. Sujan Rai supports the statement of the Sikh writers that Guru Har Rai came to the help of Dara Shikoh on the bank of the Beas

with the object of retarding the progress of his brother Aurangzeb against him. His description of the religious life of the Sikhs of those days and their deep-rooted devotion to their Gurus is very interesting. Other important Sikh topics dealt with in this work are the religious position of Nanak and his successors, the visit of Emperor Akbar to Guru Arjan and the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Delhi in 1081 Al-Hijri, 1675 A. D., and brief notes on historical places like Nanak Mata, Guru ka Chak (the present Amritsar), Makhawal (Anandpur) and Kiratpur.

The details of Guru Tegh Bahadur's travels in the east, when he accompanied Raja Ram Singh Kachhwahia during his expedition to Assam, may be gleaned from the Mughal, Assamese and other records. A Sikh named Fateh Chand accompanied the Guru during these travels and served him as a *Mewra*, or messenger. The collection of the Guru's letters, called *Hukam Namahs*, in the possession of his descendants, is an invaluable treasure of historical information. I have had the privilege of consulting the copies of some of them through the courtesy of Sardar Ranbir Singh, son of the late Sardar Karam Singh, and have obtained his permission to publish them for the benefit of the students of history. In addition to these, there are several *Hukam Namahs* preserved in the various Sikh Gurdwaras raised in memory of the Guru in the United Provinces, Behar, Bengal and Assam. Some of the letters of Mata Gujri, wife of Guru Tegh Bahadur, in the Harmandir Sahib Gurdwara of Patna are equally important and deserve to be published.

Of all the Sikh Gurus, it is on the life of Guru Gobind Singh that we have an appreciable, though not yet sufficient, amount of contemporary and original material.

We have two works from the pen of the Guru himself: the *Bichitra Natak* and the *Zafar Namah*. The first five *adhyayas* or chapters of the *Bichitra Natak* contain an invocation to God, a brief account of Lava and Kusha, the sons of Rama of Ayodhia, and a reference to his previous life of meditation at Hemkund in the Himalayas. These are of no historical importance and may be considered superfluous by a modern student of history. The sixth chapter describes, in the Guru's own words, the mission of his life in this world and helps us to understand and interpret certain events in his life which are otherwise dismissed as incredible by the materialistic-minded reader. It is with the seventh *adhyaya* that the autobiographical monologue of the Guru begins, and in seven chapters deals with his birth at Patna, the death of his father, his visit to Paonta and hunting excursions on the bank of the river Jamuna, the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun and Guler, and with the march of Prince Muazzam (afterwards Emperor Bahadur Shah) to the Punjab.

The *Zafar Namah*, or the admonitory letter of Guru Gobind Singh addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan, tells us in so many words

that he had taken to the sword as the last resort and that he was willing to enter into peace negotiations if the Emperor were to come to the Pargannah of Kangar in the Punjab. It also helps to throw some light on the details of the last battles of Anandpur and Chamkaur in December 1704.

In addition to this, there is a large number of *Hukam Namahs* of the Guru preserved in the various Gurdwaras in and outside the Punjab, and some with persons like the descendants of Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan of Machhiwara and of Fateh Chand *Mewra* referred to above. Some of these are of invaluable historical importance, and it is a pity that no sustained effort has been made to collect them for publication in a handy brochure to be drawn upon by scholars for a scientific study of the life of this warrior-saint of India.

I may here mention one such *Hukam Namah* of Guru Gobind Singh, of which a photographic copy is available in the Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, and is now placed in the Exhibition here. It is written from the neighbourhood of Agra on the 1st of Katik, Sambat 1764 Bikrami (October 1707), to the *Sanghat* of Dhaul. In it the Guru informs them that he had an interview with Bahadur Shah (4th Jamadi-ul Awwal 1119, 2nd August 1707) and had received from him presents worth sixty thousand rupees, that the other things (referring to the negotiations that had brought him so far from the Punjab) were progressing and that he soon expected to return to the Punjab, and he enjoins upon the *Sarbat* Khalsa to join him fully armed on his arrival in Kahlur. This demolishes the theory advanced by some of the biographers of the Guru that on the death of his sons at Chamkaur and Sirhind he had left his country for the Deccan in disgust, despaired of his Sikhs and of the people of the Punjab, with a view to exciting and raising the Rajputs and the Marathas against the Mughals for the fulfilment of his mission. This is not borne out by facts. The Guru was in the heart of Rajputana in March 1707 when he heard at Beghaur the news of the death of Aurangzeb. The rightful heir Mu'azzam (Bahadur Shah) was still on the North Western Frontier, with no army and no treasure. His younger brothers were in rebellion. There could be no better chance for the Guru. But he quietly returns to Shahjehanabad, and is seen lending a helping hand to the rightful Mu'azzam, the son of Aurangzeb, his worst enemy in the battle of Jajau, 18th June, 1707. The above *Hukam Naman* now comes to our help and definitely tells us, in his own words, that he expected to return to the Punjab and had in view some military operations there, for which he was issuing instructions to his Sikhs in the Punjab to join him on his arrival in Kahlur. It was only an accidental change in the circumstances, owing to the rebellion of Kam Bakhsh, that he had to accompany Bahadur Shah towards the south as the old negotiations were still in progress.

The *Sri Guru Sobha* of Sainapat is one of the rarest contemporary accounts of the life of Guru Gobind Singh. Its historical importance may be judged

from the fact that the author was closely associated with the Guru as a resident poet in his *darbar* at Anandpur and was an eye-witness of most of what he has recorded. He has described almost all the battles fought by him. His account of the institution and organization of the *Khalsa* deserves the particular attention of scholars. A few errors in his description of the Guru's travels in Rajputana, on his way to the Deccan, may be easily corrected with the help of other records. His statement regarding the reappearance of the Guru's son Zorawar Singh at Itbahpur in Rajputana, and his death soon afterwards at Chittore in a struggle with the Rajputs, is supported by Rai Chatarman in his *Chahar Gulshan Akhbar-un-Nawadar* (completed in 1173 A. H., 1759 A. D.), but it can hardly stand against the evidence of the Guru himself in the *Zafar Namah* wherein he mentions that all the four of his sons had been killed. The Guru had himself seen him falling dead in the battle of Chamkaur. Sainapat is the only author who helps us with his rational account to clear to a great extent the mystery woven round the death of Guru Gobind Singh.

Rai Chhattarman's work *Chahar Gulshan Akhbar-un-Nawadar*, mentioned above, describes the circumstances under which Ajit Singh, an adopted son of Mata Sundri, was disclaimed by her and his own son Hathi Singh was removed to Mathura after his (Ajit Singh's) execution in 1134 A. H., 1719 A. D. at Delhi. It also mentions the death of Mata Sahib Devi, a year after the death of Mata Sundri.

The *Muntakhib-ul-Lubab* of Khafi Khan only casually mentions the Guru in the train of Bahadur Shah on his way to the Deccan. The *Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi* or *Bahadur Shah Namah* of Danishmand Khan mentions him thrice: firstly on the 4th Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 1119 A. H., when he had an interview with Bahadur Shah at Agra, secondly when he met him at Burhanpur, and last of all on the 5th Ramzan 1120, when a report was made to the Emperor, a month after his death, "as to the disposal of the movable property of Guru Gobind Nanak. It was of considerable value and according to rule ought to be confiscated. The Emperor, with the remark that he was not in want of the goods of a *Darvesh*, ordered the whole to be relinquished to the heirs." [Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 90; Elliot, VII, 566.] The exemption of the Guru from the application of the rule for the Imperial officials and his occasional separation at his own will from the Imperial Camp of an expeditionary force refute the allegation made by some writers that he had entered the Imperial service as a military commander during the Deccan Expedition of Bahadur Shah.

The *Parchian* of Sewa Das is a collection of fifty Sakhis or stories of the lives of the Gurus: eight of the first eight Gurus, four of the ninth and thirty eight of the tenth. The date of writing is not known, though it does not appear to have been written long after the middle of the eighteenth century.

Bawa Kirpal Das completed his *Mahma Prakash* (Prose) in 1798 Bikrami, 1741 A. D., thirty three years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. He gives some important events from the lives of the ten Gurus and attempts a tolerably successful description of the troops of the tenth Guru.

There is another *Mahma Prakash* (in verse) by Bawa Sarup Das Bhalla, written in about 1833 Bk., 1776 A. D. The author was a descendant of the third Guru. It is the oldest work giving a connected story of the Guru Period and deserves the attention of research students of history. His account of the second and the third Gurus is better than that of any other writer.

The *Sau Sakhi* is one of the five parts of a larger work, the *Punj Sau Sakhi*, ascribed to Bhai Ram Kaur, also called Gurbakhsh Singh, a contemporary disciple of the tenth Guru, but it has been so successfully tampered with as to render the genuine portion inseparable from later interpolations. It has, therefore, to be used very cautiously by scholars.

Bhai Nand Lal was a gifted scholar in the court of Guru Gobind Singh but his works are mere eulogies from the pen of a devoted disciple and have little to add to our historical knowledge of the period.

A later manuscript work, *Dasam Padshah Antam Kautak* by Dhian Singh written about the middle of the nineteenth century, mentions the name of the surgeon sent by Bahadur Shah to attend the Guru, when he was stabbed at Nanded, as Call or Cole. The discovery of the account of this last incident of the life of the last Guru by an impartial writer, if there were any written by him, will clear the mystery which enshrouds it.

The Persian histories of Budh Singh Arora, Bakht Mal, Khushwaqt Rai, Ahmad Shah, Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din alias Bute Shah and Ali-ud-Din, and the Gurmukhi works of Rattan Singh, Santokh Singh and Gian Singh belong to later periods of Sikh history. They are only secondary authorities on the Gurus, but in many cases they are extremely useful.

A word about the *Suraj Prakash* and I have finished. This is a voluminous work of the highest literary merit from the pen of a genius covering the entire Guru Period in about 6400 pages, written in about 1844. But, in the absence of contemporary records at his disposal, and wanting in the modern sense of scientific historical research, its author Bhai Santokh Singh has not been able to penetrate beyond the crust of the then prevalent accounts. He considered all the Punjabi works on the subject, from the *Mahma Prakash* to the *Sau Sakhi* and other similar works, as equally authentic. Its historical accuracy, therefore, had not remained unquestioned. But thanks to the rare scholarship and researchful attitude of Bhai Sahib Vir Singh of Amritsar that after incessant labour of several years this gigantic work has now been placed in the hands of the public in a more presentable form in fourteen volumes, well edited from the historical point of view.